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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2405

March 24, 1989



A SEVENSPOTTED LADY BEETLE begins dinner on a pea aphid, one of its favorite meals. Pitting a beneficial predator insect, like this beetle, against a plant pest, like an aphid, is an example of biological control -- an environmentally sound method of pest control. (USDA Photo.)

USDA
RECORDS
MAR 29 1989

USDA CELEBRATED 100 YEARS of biological control March 22, with speeches and an exhibit in the Administration Building patio that included live insects and fish. For biological pest control materials, including 3/4" video clips of biological control featuring insects, call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

GLOBAL WARNINGS -- Humans have built up enough "greenhouse" gasses in the past 100 years to raise average world temperatures 3 to 9 degrees by the middle of the next century, according to a two-year study by the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA says the "greenhouse" gasses will melt polar ice caps, expand oceans and cause drought in lower latitudes. In contrast, the Earth has warmed only 10 degrees in the last 18,000 years. Contact: Al Heier (202) 382-4374. And, NASA has released shuttle photos that show vast environmental changes on Earth, including one showing a dense white smoke cloud -- one million square miles large -- covering the Amazon River basin. The photo offers striking evidence of the extent that the Amazon forests are being burned to clear land. Contact: Joel Levine (804) 864-5692.



KATHLEEN KATRAS, former TV editor and videographer with USDA's Video and Teleconference Division, has joined Eric Parsons in the Broadcast Services Branch of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Katras was a cable program producer in Manassas, Va., before joining USDA's Office of Governmental and Public Affairs two years ago. Want more info about ASCS farm programs or radio and TV services? Call Parsons or Katras on (202) 447-7807. (USDA Photo.)

DEBT RESTRUCTURING -- USDA has made debt restructuring offers to 23,000 farmers who are seriously delinquent in their loans. "Every completed application will be processed in time for farmers to put their spring crop in the ground," says Neal Sox Johnson, acting administrator of Farmers Home Administration. Johnson also says even those whose applications are incomplete will be able to farm this year because of expanded appeal rights. Contact: Ron Ence (202) 447-6903.

CANNED POSSUM -- Greg Harkins gets the biggest laugh when a Yankee gets a tin of his "canned possum," the Washington Times reports. "Those poor things don't have a sense of humor," Harkins says -- of Yankees, not opossums. "You give a Yankee a can of this stuff and he'll say, 'Thank you very much. I'll go home and try it'." Harkins, a rocking chair craftsman who's made chairs for Former President Ronald Reagan, gives out cans with labels that proclaim the tins contain "sun-baked possum ... meticulously prepared by one of our many mobile canneries operating dusk until dawn along Possum Bend Rd., Vaugh, Miss., and other blacktop roads in and throughout Yazoo Co." Harkins won't say just what's in the cans. Contact Greg Harkins at (601) 362-4233.

FAMILY ECONOMICS -- The latest issue (Feb.) of USDA's Family Economics Review is full of the raw material for stories and features. Some of the studies include: financial status of single-parent households, trends in clothing and textiles, the declining middle-class thesis, housing affordability, personal bankruptcies and employment characteristics of older women. Want a copy? Call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1659 -- This program is for all the parents who have children that are asking them: "Please ... buy me a horse." This edition of AGRICULTURE USA will give you the pros and cons of horseownership, and of course, the cost. Brenda Curtis talks with retired Texas A&M Extension Horse Specialist B.F. Yeats and the Director of the Maryland Horse Center Elizabeth Madlener about buying that horse for your child. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1648 -- USDA News Highlights; USDA quarantine to stop bee parasite; FmHA is on top of debt restructuring applications; Farmers Home changes; saving the family farm. (Weekly reel of news features)

CONSUMER TIME #1140 -- Some perspective on food safety; consumer chemical phobia; a weighty dilemma; express mail meals; a program for foster children. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- March 31, prospective plantings, grain stocks; Monday, April 3, tobacco outlook; Tuesday, April 4, weekly weather & crop outlook; Wednesday, April 5, horticultural exports; Tuesday, April 11, U.S. crop production, world ag supply & demand; Wednesday, April 12, world ag & world grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and USDA NEWS SERVICE are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

Thursdays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 7:30-7:45 p.m., EST,
ORIGINAL UPLINK Transponder 12D

Saturdays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 10:30-11:15 a.m., EST,
ORIGINAL UPLINK Transponder 10D

Mondays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 8:30-9:15 a.m., EST,
REPEAT UPLINK Transponder 12D

OFF MIKE

ECONOMIC RECOVERY...of some producers in Texas has been helped by oil prices, says Curt Lancaster (VSA, San Angelo). Oil recently hit \$20 a barrel. Says with improved income and timely rains the backlog in new equipment sales could be broken, but that dryness in the northern panhandle makes that region's wheat questionable.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY...events in the Nation's capital were covered by farm broadcasters, including Bill Ray (Agrinet Farm Net, Richmond, Va.) and crew with satellite coverage.

Robin Kinney (Linder Farm Net, Willmar, Minn.) interviewed many ag leaders who gathered for ceremonies on Capitol Hill.

FARM BROADCASTERS...head south in the winter, too. Farm tours in Florida and Georgia were on Bob Bosold's itinerary (WAXX, Eau Claire, Wisc.).

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AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS...are a major economic item in many South American nations. Max Armstrong (WGN/Tribune Radio Net, Chicago) has been looking at the soybean crop in Argentina and Brazil; says soybeans provide Argentina more dollars than any other commodity.

SOUTH CENTRAL...regional meeting of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters is scheduled May 19-21 in Springfield, Mo. Mike Wiles (KTTS, Springfield) will serve as host.

LAWN & GARDEN...time is upon us in many regions. Larry and Loretta Lawndabblers may need reminding not to fertilize trees during bud expansion. Before swelling or after leaves have fully expanded is OK, but fertilizing during budding can add top growth, which gets the tree out of equilibrium with its environment. That's dangerous to trees in drought areas.



VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio & Television Division.